

Winooski City Council

Remote Meeting

Monday, March 8, 2021 at 6 PM

Attend online: <https://zoom.us/j/93150437380>

Attend by phone: 1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 931 5043 7380

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Agenda Review**
- IV. Public Comment**
- V. Consent Agenda**
 - a. Approval: Liquor Control and City Council Minutes of 02/16/2021
 - b. Approval: Accounts Payable Warrant as of 03/05/2021 and Subsequent to Payout for January 2021
 - c. Approval: Resolution to Approve Dump Truck Financing
 - d. Approval: ACH Vendor Authorization – KS StateBank Government Finance
 - e. Approval: City Manager's Annual Review
- VI. Council Reports**
- VII. City Updates**
- VIII. Regular Items**
 - a. Discussion: City Manager Search Process
 - Potential Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. §313 (a) (3) "the appointment or employmentof a public officer or employee..."
- X. Adjourn**

Mayor Kristine Lott - klott@winooski.vt.gov
Councilor Hal Colston - hcolston@winooski.vt.gov
Councilor Jim Duncan - jduncan@winooski.vt.gov
Councilor Mike Myers - mmyers@winooski.vt.gov
Jessie Baker, City Manager - jbaker@winooski.vt.gov

MINUTES

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Councilor Colston led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Mayor Kristine Lott

Councilors: Hal Colston, James Duncan Michael Myers, Bryn Oakleaf



Officers Present:

Jessie Baker, City Manager; Carol Barrett, City Clerk; Angela Aldieri, Finance Director; John Audy, Fire Chief; Phoebe Townsend, Human Resources Manager; Heather Carrington, Economic Development Officer; Eric Vorwald, Planning & Zoning Manager; Ray Coffey, Community Services Director.

Others Present:

Jess Wignal, Steven Berbeco, Samuel Myers

III. Agenda Review – None

IV. Public Comment – None

V. Consent Agenda

The Mayor stated we would approve items b., c. and d so that Bryn can vote on these items:

MOTION by Councilor Myers seconded by Councilor Duncan to approve items b., c. and d. as presented. Voted and passed. 4-0

MOTION by Councilor Myers seconded by Councilor Duncan to approve items a. and e. as presented. Voted and passed 3-0-1. Councilor Oakleaf abstained.

VI. Council Reports

Mayor Lott wanted to thank the Winooski voters for turning out on Town Meeting Day. I also want to welcome our new Councilor Bryn Oakleaf.

She also shared some updates, myself, Hal Jessie; members of staff joined a regional meeting related to GAPS in support of mental health for folks struggling with issues within our region. It was organized by our Town Managers in our region and had folks from the medical profession, police and public safety and also public officials to discuss a path forward to providing better support. It was a great conversation where those gaps are.

Councilor Colston said it was exciting to hear from Amelia, VT Refugee Resettlement program and how they are looking to resume the Refugee and immigrant levels that were at around four years ago.

Councilor Colston shared an update on H227 bill. It was introduced before the town meeting recess. We had several witnesses come through to offer their support. After some discussion with the committee it was decided that Section 907 which deals with home rule would allow us or any other City or Town to incorporate a charter change that's been approved by legislature. If we were to considerate it and it's something we wish to pursue, that we could also do the same without going through the entire process as we do now. We decided to pull section 907 out so we could visit it another time as a separate bill and pursue it that way. The other change that we wanted to see was to mimic the definition in the Montpelier charter change, which also deals with all resident voting, they know it as non-citizen voting, and we wanted to make sure that our definition was pretty



much mimicking their definition of legal residents. We will get a revised bill from legislative counsel that will reflect those two changes from all the other changes will be intact. This is being done to expedite this bill to get through the process. We are in crossover and this Friday is the deadline for any bills coming out of the House and going to the Senate.

Councilor Duncan shared an update from the Housing Commission meeting. They reviewed some changes to the Housing Trust Fund, one is to remove the requirement that rents or mortgages be 30% or less of the persons income, the other one is detailed allowing a higher level of liquid asset holdings for an applicant for their ineligible programs to have more cash on hand.

Councilor Myers said the Municipal Infrastructure is holding a meeting tomorrow to discuss sidewalks and adding two streets to the study. He will update us at the next meeting. I would like to congratulate Jim on retaining his seat and welcoming Bryn to the City Council.

Councilor Oakleaf said as the current board chair for CSWD. I am taking a look at the new duties that I will have as City Councilor, I will evaluate my commitments to the district. We currently do not have an alternate and would ask that we look into recruiting an alternate for the district commissioners. I'm happy to serve in that board Chair roll through the remainder of the Fiscal year. I'm also happy to stay on the commission as well as time allows with my commitments to the Council. I would also work with the alternate to get them up to speed and potentially to take over if I need to step back.

VII. City Updates

- ***COVID Update***

- Last week, we had 17 new cases in Winooski. Our case count has been in the teens for the last three weeks. Remind all to:
 - Not spend time with anyone outside of your immediate household
 - Wear a mask when in the presence of others
 - Socially distance
 - Wash your hands
 - And get your vaccine when it's your turn
- Testing daily continues.
 - At the OCC
 - 2 to 8 on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays.
 - 9 to 3 all other days including Saturday and Sunday.
 - Daily – can sign up at the VDH website or walk in. All information is on our webpage
 - All materials are translated and there will be translators on site.
- Vaccines are now available for those 65 and older, school and child care staff, and people 55 and older with high-risk health conditions.
 - NO walk-ups. You must register in advance.



- Winooski clinics are Tuesday at the Armory
- [Healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) or 855-722-7878
- VDH has partnered with the City, School, and partners on opportunities for LEP folks to be vaccinated with similar BIPOC clinics starting soon.
- **Town Meeting Day**
 - Welcome Councilor Oakleaf
 - Thanks to all the candidates who ran energetic campaigns! It's wonderful to see so many wanting to serve Winooski.
 - City budget approved with 73% of the vote (update from 64% last year.)
 - Cannabis item was approved with 74% of the vote
 - F-35 Resolution was approved with 67% of the vote
 - Administratively sent to Governor
 - Thanks to the over 1,000 of our neighbors who came out to vote!
- **Winooski Reads**, book group for adult readers (18+) is back! Join us virtually with friends and neighbors for a lively discussion of each month's selected title and share your thoughts, insights, and reactions to the book.
 - Free to join - to register, please email Nate Eddy, Library Director: neddy@winooski.vt.gov
 - Virtual meet-ups occur on the last Tuesday of each month: 6:30 - 8 PM
 - Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 6:30 PM:
 - The Guest Room by Chris Bohjalian.
 - Titles are available for checkout and pick up at the Library on a first-served basis
- **Winooski Library presents the second installment Cook the Book - A Virtual Cooking Series**
 - This program aims to engage our residents in a fun and educational (and delicious) experience that can be enjoyed safely at home. Participants can learn to prepare a healthy and delicious recipe in real-time with a featured local chef while introducing new recipes and techniques for any skill level.
 - Please note: a limited number of ingredient kits will be provided to participants (first-served) and made possible by the generous support of City Market Co-op and our guest chefs.
 - Our second session is Jamaican cuisine with Chef Jackie Thomas.
 - Thursday, March 18, 2021, from 6 - 7:30 PM
 - This program is free and only available to Winooski residents. Space is limited and available on a first-served basis - to register, contact Nate Eddy, Library Director: neddy@winooski.vt.gov / 802 655 6424
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- **Reminder that 2021 Myers Pool Passes are available for purchase online!**
 - 2021 season passes are now available for the Myers Memorial Pool. To get your season passes today, please visit <https://www.winooski.vt.gov/pool>.
 - Questions about the Myers Memorial Pool and season pass scholarships can be sent to: Jenny Hill, Recreation Programs Manager - jhill@winooski.vt.gov / 802 777 1621
- Registration is open for many upcoming programs, including youth soccer, youth and adult tennis, April Break Gardening Camp, and Thrive Summer! Visit the City website for more information, or to sign up.

VIII. Regular Items

a. Discussion: City Manager Search Process

- Potential Executive Session per 1 V.S.A §313 (a) (3) "the appointment or employment... of a public officer or employee..."

The Mayor said she would like to discuss the City Manager hiring process. Unfortunately, Jessie Baker will be leaving as City Manager on May 15 and we need to look at a process for hiring a new Manager.

I have included a memo outlining a possible process. I will come to the next meeting with a proposal with an internal vs. external process and how we want to approach that. This memo mostly centers on the actual recruitment and hiring process for the permanent City Manager. The focus of the structure is to engage a diverse group of City leadership, staff, and community members in this entire process through an appointed steering committee. Some opportunities for staff engagement and opportunities for public engagement along with the roll that we play as Council.

What I outline here is Phoebe our Human Resource Manager and I will staff this process and support it. As a Council, we will appoint a Steering Committee, various stake holders will serve in the role. They will take on the role before things get to Council. They will also be helping craft the job posting, the evaluation criteria, competency and interview questions that will be used with all candidates. There will also be opportunity for staff to weigh in on that piece as we think about what are the key competencies that you want in this role. This group would also conduct the first round of interviews and select the finalist to push on to our City Council.

I'm looking tonight for questions, thoughts, maybe feedback on composition of the committee or the roles. If there is something missing here, we will be able to vote on those at our next meeting. Any feedback from this discussion to come to a final proposal at our next meeting.

Councilor Duncan asked if there is a budget for this recruitment. Will there be funds available for advertising and if we need more can we address it so that we do not want to delay the



search time? Ms. Townsend said we do have funds for recruitment but we may want to consider expanded that a little and we can provide more information at the next meeting. Councilor Oakleaf is curious if there was any debriefing that ever happened with Jessie's hiring and how that process went. I'm also curious for the review committee if there was any implicit bias training that was incorporated into that as well. I know UVM has a great training program for hiring committees. The Mayor said she had conversation with the former Mayor about Jessie's hiring process. I don't know that any training came up or that occurred but that is something we can look into. Some parts of this group will consist of Council and staff who have been through this. As Jessie mentioned later this month we will be attending equity training.

Councilor Colston said he is on the board of Trustees at UVM Medical Center. He introduced an idea imbedding in the search committee a non-voting member who would critique us on our progress with regards to bias. I also have seen it done having staff that has the skills step into that role to monitor the process. I'm wondering about the competency for this position. What important qualities are we looking for in a leader? It could be a useful exercise. The Mayor said the thinking so far what Phoebe and I discussed was to pull together standard competencies, staff would have a chance to weigh in on that. The Steering Committee would decide those competencies and make final decisions that they can add and remove. I think the composition of the idea of the committee is to have a small representation of different community members that could be making that input. It sounds like you want a broader outreach of residents being able to input on the competencies. She also said she is thinking about making this process very public and folks who want to provide feedback. Included in this process is a step in here about the third interviews with the final 2-3 candidates doing a presentation in a public forum inviting community members to attend and get to know these candidates and taking feedback from the public for a period of time after that.

The Mayor said you mentioned imbedding a non-voting member to take on that role looking for bias. Have you done that in practice yet? Councilor Colston said they did when they hired Dr. Steven Loeffler, who was the President COO of UVM Medical Center. That process was in place for that. Kathy Johnson from CQ Associates was hired to do that work and provide feedback.

Ms. Harrington said there is a possibility that we could have resources through the Working Community Challenge Grant. We do have technical assistance through that group that may offer us a direct path to have some kind of resource available.

Councilor Oakleaf asked if the Director of Diversity Equity and Inclusion will be hired and in place by then? Ms. Townsend said we are finishing the 2nd round of interviews next week. The Equity Director should be on board by mid-May. I think they will be able to provide some expertise.

The Mayor asked how they felt about the Committee composition. This includes 9 members; Mayor, Councilor, HR Manager, Dept. Head, a member of staff who is not a Dept. Head. Somebody from Downtown Business Association, School, potentially a Commission member



and someone from a close partner of our community organization, or even a resident at large. Nine people total.

Councilor Duncan said the composition does cover the basis. The partner organization in particular feels like an important role to have because it serves a function of understanding. I think nine people is already a lot. I hope all those people can all attend as much as possible so it's consistent. I'm wondering about moving the resident at large potential seat to a commission or former councilor role and dedicating one spot that has to be filled by a community partner.

Councilor Myers asked if we could ask any former area Managers to attend this process. The Mayor said she has been in contact with one, and was offered to provide a memo with some information of their experience and what they are looking for. We could consider one of those folks to fill one of the roles.

Councilor Myers thinks the process that the Mayor proposed is a good fit for everything.

Councilor Holston asked if you have given any thought what time commitment will be for the search committee. The Mayor said she and Phoebe discussed that and we think it will be 10-12 hours over the course of several weeks. At least 2 meetings at the beginning, homework and conducting first round interviews.

The Mayor asked if there was any public comment. No one responded.

Councilor Duncan is interested in a strong show in commitment to Diversity Equity Inclusion and Justice for this candidate. There is equal employment criteria that have to follow. It looks like the process of the search committee will develop the competencies, finalize those, and go forth with the job posting. At what points will Council and public be able to start commenting on those? The way this process has been envisioned is that we would have to vote as Council on those, or is that going to be delegated to the search committee.

Mayor Lott said the way it is outlined is that the search committee owns that not the Council. We would not vote but my thinking is we have the opportunity to share our thoughts with the search committee as members of the Council. I need to come back at our next meeting with an updated timeline and with some options for how we are going to address bias in the committee and I will make a change in the composition to isolate a partner organization and make sure we have that representation. We will also attempt to add more clarity to what the public input looks like throughout the process and where we can engage.

Councilor Oakleaf said she thinks there is value in having Jessie contribute her perspective on the competency that she believes would be valuable given her experience the last four years.

MOTION by Councilor Myers seconded by Councilor Colston to adjourn City Council meeting at 6:45 p.m. Voted and passed 4-0.

ATTEST: _____

City Clerk

